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# Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SAB-02
H-02 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 /058 W
----------049845 172200Z /63
P 172121Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9568
USICA WASHDC PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

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JOINT STATE/USICA MESSAGE

FOR: IOP/M
SECSTATE FOR ARA

EO 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT, APRIL 17, 1978

1. PANAMA CANAL -- SATURDAY, APRIL 15, SEVEN OF THE NINE MAJORMEXICO CITY DAILIES CARRIED NEWS AGENCY STORIES ON THEFAILURE OF EFFORTS BY THE DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP IN THE SENATE TO CONVINCE SENATOR DENNIS DECONCINI TO ACCEPT A COMPROMISE FORMULA THAT WOULD SATISFY THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE AND WOULD ALSO PROMOTE THE RATIFICATION OF THE SECOND PANAMA CANAL TREATY. STORIES NOTE THAT SENATORS MCGOVERN, MOYNIHAN, HASKELL AND METZENBAUM HAVE SAID THEY WILL VOTE AGAINST THE TREATY IF DECONCINI'S AMENDMENT IS NOT CHANGED.

2. THREE OF THESE NEWSPAPERS ALSO REPORTED ON THE "STATE OF UNREST PREVAILING IN PANAMA" AS A RESULT OF UNHAPPINESS OVER THE AMENDMENTS TO THE TREATY. SUCH A SITUATION IS EVIDENCED, ACCORDING TO THE STORY, BY THE MOBILIZATION OF PANAMA'S NATIONAL GUARD CAUSED
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BY THE VISIT BY U.S. SOLDIERS TO A MUSEUM IN PANAMA WHICH WAS THOUGHT TO BE AN "INVASION OF PANAMA BY THE UNITED STATES." THESE STORIES ALSO REPORT ON THE POSTURE BY PANAMA'S ARCHBISHOP, MARCOS GREGORIO MCGRATH, WHO HAS REPORTEDLY JOINED OTHER PANAMANIAN RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC LEADERS IN URGING PANAMANIAN HEAD OF STATE OMAR TORRIJOS NOT TO ACCEPT THE

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AMENDMENTS TO THE TREATIES.

3. UNOMASUNO(LEFTIST-NATIONALISTIC) IS THE ONLY NEWSPAPER TO COMMENT EDITORIALLY ON THIS ISSUE. THE NEWSPAPER SAYS THAT "A GOOD DOSE OF BLACK HUMOR IS NEEDED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO COME UP WITH THE PROPOSAL THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CARRY OUT A POLICY OF CONSULTATION WITH LATIN AMERICA PRECISELY AT THE TIME WHEN THE PROBLEM OF THE PANAMA CANAL IS ACTUALLY BURNING THE HANDS OF PRESIDENT CARTER... THE FIRST ISSUE TO BE DISCUSSED WOULD NOT BE THEVALUE OF SUCH CONSULTATIONS BUT THE VALUE OF THE AGREEMENTS THAT SHOULD LEAD TO THE SIGNING OF A TREATY."

4. THE EDITORIAL FURTHER CRITICIZES SENATOR DECONCINI SAYING THAT "WITH THE MENTALITY OF THE FIRST OF THE TWO ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTS HE HAS COME FROM ANONIMITY TO REPRESENT THE MOST REACTIONARY POINTS OF VIEW, TO TELL VULNERABLE COUNTRIES THAT ANY POSSIBILITY OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GREAT SUPERPOWER IS A MERE ILLUSION AND ALSO TO UPSET THE WHOLE HEMISPHERE... THE PANAMA CANAL IS EVIDENCE OF IMPERIALISTIC PENETRATION, AND IRREFUTABLE TESTIMONY THAT THE COUNTRY WHICH DEMANDS RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DOES NOT RESPECT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF NATIONS, A CONFESSION THAT HEGEMONIC DOMINATION IS ABLE TO CHANGE THE LANGUAGE
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OF DIPLOMACY WITH THAT OF POWER. THE U.S. PRESENCE IN PANAMA IS ACTUALLY AN AGGRESSION TO ALL LATIN AMERICA; AND THE REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE NEW TREATIES, WHICH OPEN THE POSSIBILITIES TO THE RESCUE OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF PANAMA OVER ITS OWN TERRITORY, WOULD SHOW THAT THE UNITED STATES IS A NATION IMPOSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE WITH... EVEN WITHIN U.S. SOCIETY THERE ARE VOICES AGAINST AMENDMENTS TO THE TREATIES WHICH WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE AT ALL FOR THE HONOR OF A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY. AND IF THE U.S. SENATE, LED BY PEOPLE OF MONOLITHIC IDEOLOGIES, CLOSES THE DOORS TO THE PROPOSED SOLUTION, THE PANAMA CANAL WILL THEN SERVE TO SEPARATE TWO COMMUNITIES IN THE SAME CONTINENT RATHER THAN TO JOIN TWO OCEANS."

5. APRIL 16 -- IN GENERAL THERE WAS ONLY NEWS AGENCY COVERAGE ON THE PANAMA CANAL IN SUNDAY MEXICO CITY PAPERS, WITH NO EDITORIAL COMMENTS OR COLUMNS ON THIS SUBJECT.

6. EL NACIONAL (OFFICIAL) AND EL SOL (LEFT-NATIONALISTIC) CARRIED AP STORY QUOTING GENERAL OMAR TORRIJOS AS SAYING

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HE HAD "CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES' SPIRIT OF
JUSTICE," ADDING THAT HE HAS "FAITH IN PRESIDENT
CARTER." THIS SAME STORY IS ALSO PUBLISHED IN UNOMAS-
UNO (INDEPENDENT-LEFTIST) SENT BY EFE, WHILE
NOVEDADES (MODERATE) AND EL HERALDO (CONSERVATIVE)
RUN ANOTHER AP STORY DATELINED WASHINGTON THAT TUESDAY'S
SENATE DECISION TO RATIFY THE TREATY OR NOT IS PRESIDENT
CARTER'S "BAPTISM OF FIRE" AND THAT THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION IS ON THE VERGE OF "DISASTER AS FAR

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AS FOREIGN POLICY IS CONCERNED."

7. EL DIA (MARXIST-ORIENTED) IS THE ONLY PAPER TO
CARRY A STORY FROM PANAMA IN WHICH TORRIJOS ASSERTS
THAT THE "DECONCINI CLAUSE" IS DIRECTED NOT ONLY
AGAINST PANAMA BUT AGAINST THE ENTIRE HEMISPHERE AND
IN CONFLICT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. PRESIDENT
CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ OF VENEZUELA WAS QUOTED AS SAYING
THAT HE IS CONFIDENT THAT U.S. SENATE WILL NOT COMMIT
AN "INJUSTICE" AND WILL NOT PROVOKE A "HARMFUL"
SITUATION REGARDING THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY RATIFICATION.

8. APRIL 17 -- ALL NINE MAJOR MEXICO CITY DAILIES
MONDAY CARRY NEWS AGENCY STORY QUOTING COLOMBIAN
PRESIDENT ALFONSO LOPEZ MICHELSEN CRITICIZING UNITED
STATES INTERVENTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA AND REITERATING
PANAMA'S SOVEREIGN RIGHT OVER THE PANAMA CANAL.
STORIES SAY THE COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT EXPRESSED HIS
CONCERNOVER FUTURE U.S. INTERVENTIONS IN LATIN
AMERICA UNDER THE EXCUSE OF GUARANTEEING
FREE TRANSIT THROUGH THE CANAL, PROTECTING HUMAN

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RIGHTS AND FIGHTING DRUG TRAFFICKING AND PRODUCTION.

9. OTHER STORIES ON THE PANAMA CANAL DEAL WITH
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PANAMANIAN LEADER OMAR TORRIJOS'S
OPTIMISM ABOUT SENATE RATIFICATION OF THE NEW TREATIES,
THE UNCERTAINTY IN PANAMA OVER THE SENATE RATIFICATION,
AND THE DEMAND BY A GROUP OF PANAMANIAN INTELLECTUALS
THAT THE TORRIJOS GOVERNMENT SHOULD REJECT U.S.
SENATE AMENDMENTS TO THE NEW TREATIES.

10. PROCESO MAGAZINE (LEFTIST-POLITICAL-INFLUENTIAL)
STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SENATE VOTE ON
THE TREATIES SAYING THAT "TOMORROW WILL BE A DECISIVE
DAY FOR LATIN AMERICA." THE MAGAZINE UNDERSCORES
THE WHITE HOUSE MOVES TO CONVINCE UNDECIDED SENATORS
TO RATIFY THE TREATIES. IT FURTHER NOTES THAT THE
U.S. GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO INCREASE THE NATION'S
COPPER STOCKS WILL PREVENT THE STRIKE OF COPPER
MINE WORKERS IN ARIZONA AND CONSTITUTE A CONCESSION
TO WIN THE VOTE OF SENATOR DECONCINI. THE EDITORIAL
CRITICIZES THE DECONCINI AMENDMENT TO THE TREATIES
SAYING, "IT CONSTITUTES THE MOST FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF
THE SOVEREIGNTY OF A COUNTRY...AND IF BEFORE SUCH
AMENDMENTS THE TREATIES WERE HIGHLY ADVANTAGEOUS
FOR THE UNITED STATES, NOW THEY HAVE BECOME TOTALLY
UNACCEPTABLE AND THE CAUSE OF INDIGNATION NOT ONLY FOR
PANAMA BUT FOR THE WHOLE WORLD...IN ANY EVENT, EVEN
IF THE UNITED STATES SUCCEEDS IN MAINTAINING ITS
FORCES IN THE PANAMA CANAL FOR A FEW MORE YEARS,
ALMOST ALL LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS WILL BE AGAINST
SUCH AN ACTION WHICH WILL CONSTITUTE A SHAMEFUL
EXAMPLE OF COLONIALISM, RACISM AND COMPLETE
EXPLOITATION." THE EDITORIAL FINALLY NOTES THAT
SEVERAL HEADS OF STATE OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES
HAVE EVEN ASKED TORRIJOS "NOT TO GIVE VALIDITY
THROUGH A TREATY TO THE U.S. RIGHT TO INTERVENE IN
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PANAMANIAN TERRITORY." LUCEY

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# Message Attributes

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